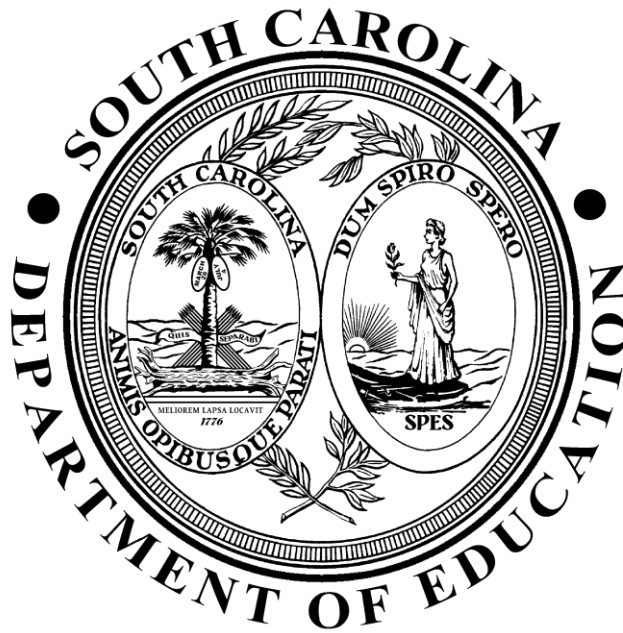


**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**  
*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*



**South Carolina Family Engagement K–12  
Framework**

March 22, 2019

The South Carolina Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability in admission to, treatment in, or employment in its programs and activities. Inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies should be made to the Employee Relations Manager, 1429 Senate Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201, 803-734-8781. For further information on federal nondiscrimination regulations, including Title IX, contact the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at [OCR.DC@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.DC@ed.gov) or call 1-800-421-3481.

## **Contents**

The Legislative Mandate.....	1
Introduction.....	3
SCDE Mission and Vision .....	3
South Carolina’s Definition of Family Engagement .....	4
Family Engagement K-12 Framework and Rationale for Success .....	4
Family Engagement K-12 Framework Strategies for Success .....	4
Building Relationships.....	5
Communication.....	5
Linking Families to Learning Outcomes .....	5
Collaborative Practices .....	5
Community Partnerships.....	6
Appendix A: Acknowledgements .....	7
Appendix B: References .....	10
Appendix C: Resources.....	11
Appendix D: Family Engagement Toolkit and Quick Self-Assessment .....	13
Table 1. Quick Self-Assessment Tool .....	14
Table 2. Quick Self-Assessment Tool .....	15
Table 3. Quick Self-Assessment Tool .....	16
Table 4. Quick Self-Assessment Tool .....	17
Table 5. Quick Self-Assessment Tool .....	18
Appendix E: Promising Partnership Practices from Schools in South Carolina .....	19

## **The Legislative Mandate**

As provided by state statute, the State Superintendent of Education is charged with promoting family engagement in South Carolina's schools. Specifically, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-150 (2000) provides that the State Superintendent shall:

1. promote parental involvement as a priority for all levels from pre-K through grade 12, with particular emphasis at the middle and high school levels where parental involvement is currently least visible;
2. designate a Department of Education staff position whose specific role is to coordinate statewide initiatives to support school and district parental involvement;
3. collect and disseminate to districts and schools practices shown by research to be effective in increasing parental involvement at all grade levels;
4. provide parental involvement staff development training for district and school liaisons, as needed;
5. provide technical assistance relating to parental involvement training to districts and schools;
6. sponsor statewide conferences on best practices;
7. identify, recommend, and implement ways to integrate programs and funding for maximum benefit to enhance parental involvement;
8. enroll the Department of Education as a state member of national organizations which promote proven parental involvement frameworks, models, and practices and provide related services to state and local members;
9. promote and encourage local school districts to join national parental involvement organizations; and
10. monitor and evaluate parental involvement programs statewide by designing a statewide system which will determine program effectiveness and identify best practices and report evaluation findings and implications to the General Assembly, State Board of Education, and Education Oversight Committee.

Similarly, district superintendents are charged with ensuring parental involvement efforts. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-170 (2000) states:

- A. Each school district superintendent shall consider:
  1. designating staff to serve as a parent liaison for the district to coordinate parental involvement initiatives and coordinate community and agency collaboration to support parents and families;
  2. requiring each school to designate a faculty contact for parental involvement efforts to work collaboratively with the district coordinator and network with other school faculty contacts;
  3. requiring each school principal to designate space within the school specifically for parents which contains materials and resources on the numerous ways parents and schools can and should partner for a child's academic success; and
  4. encouraging principals to adjust class and school schedules to accommodate parent-teacher conferences at times more convenient to parents and, to the extent

possible, accommodate parents in cases where transportation and normal school hours present a hardship.

- B. Each school district superintendent shall:
1. include parental involvement expectations as part of each principal's evaluation;
  2. include information about parental involvement opportunities and participation in the district's annual report; and
  3. disseminate to all parents of the district the expectations enumerated in Section 59-28-180.

Parents are also expected to play a critical role in student's learning and academic success. As provided by S.C. Code Ann. §58-28-180 (2000):

Parent involvement influences student learning and academic performance; therefore, parents are expected to:

1. uphold high expectations for academic achievement;
2. expect and communicate expectations for success;
3. recognize that parental involvement in middle and high school is equally as critical as in elementary school;
4. ensure attendance and punctuality;
5. attend parent-teacher conferences;
6. monitor and check homework;
7. communicate with the school and teachers;
8. build partnerships with teachers to promote successful school experiences;
9. attend, when possible, school events;
10. model desirable behaviors;
11. use encouraging words;
12. stimulate thought and curiosity; and
13. show support for school expectations and efforts to increase student learning.

For additional state and federal laws that promote parental engagement, please refer to Appendix C (Resources).

## Introduction

In recent years, the focus on “parental involvement” has radically shifted to “parent engagement.” The evolution of parent involvement to parent engagement signifies moving parents from routinely attending school functions as invited participants to a more active role as partners in students’ achievement. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) recognizes the value of family and community engagement and the important role it serves in supporting the components of the *Profile of a South Carolina Graduate (Profile)*.

# Profile of the South Carolina Graduate



## World Class Knowledge

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

## World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

## Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

Approved by SCASA Superintendent's Roundtable and SC Chamber of Commerce  
SC Education Oversight Committee, SC State Board of Education, & SC Dep't of Education

District superintendents and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce collaborated during an 18-month period in an effort to strengthen the South Carolina diploma and best prepare graduates for college and career readiness. They agreed that to be successful in college and careers, South Carolina graduates must have the knowledge, skills, and characteristics of the *Profile*.

Family engagement is of utmost importance in ensuring each student has an opportunity to be college, career, and citizenship ready upon graduation. The *South Carolina Family Engagement K-12 Framework (Framework)* serves as a resource guide for schools and districts to plan and implement strategies for engaging families.

## SCDE Mission and Vision

The mission of the SCDE is to provide leadership and support so that all public education students graduate prepared for success. The vision is that all students graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and citizenship.

The SCDE, Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE), seeks to identify strategies that are inclusive, encouraging, and effective in initiating and sustaining positive school-family partnerships. By establishing partnerships with other state agencies, school improvement councils, institutions of higher education, civic organizations, and churches throughout the state, the SCDE will increase its efforts in connecting community resources to support schools in engaging families. The FACE office will provide access to parent resources, post links to professional development seminars, explore research, and share best practices to engage families in the success of their students meeting the *Profile* and becoming ready for college, careers, and citizenship.

### **South Carolina's Definition of Family Engagement**

The SCDE defines family engagement as when, “[f]amilies are actively involved in the learning and development of all students to become college- and career-ready.”

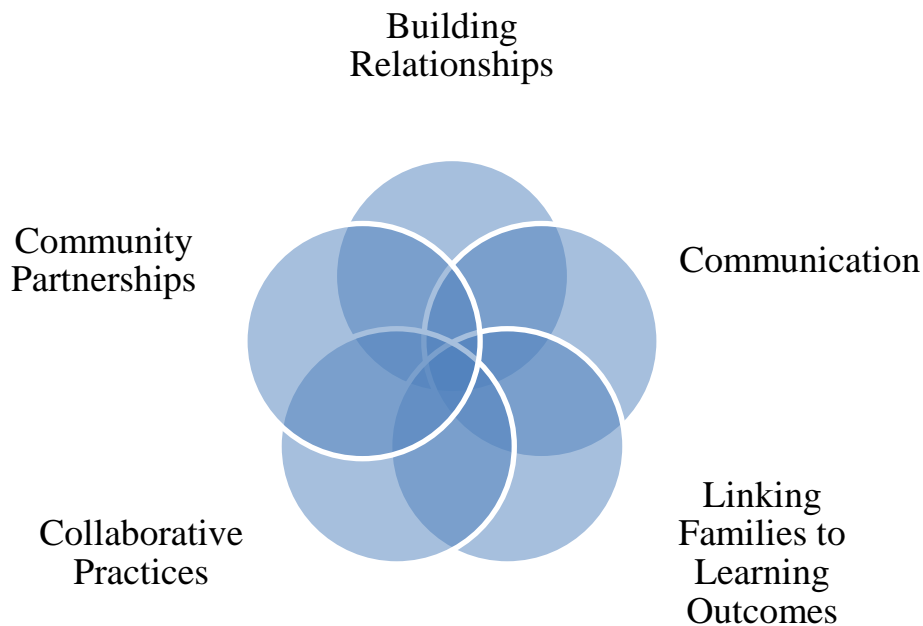
### **Family Engagement K-12 Framework and Rationale for Success**

The purpose of the *Framework* is to influence thinking and suggest action steps necessary to implement family engagement policies and practices at the state, district, and school levels. The *Framework* provides a structure for educators who promote family-friendly schools where all stakeholders are equipped with the necessary tools to support student success as outlined by the *Profile*. This document, in accordance with state statute, provides additional guidance to districts on developing family engagement action plans, and identifies resources to implement the strategies of the *Framework* that promote positive outcomes for all students in South Carolina. With the assistance of the Council of Chief State School Officers and numerous stakeholders, the SCDE has thoughtfully developed the *Framework*.

### **Family Engagement K-12 Framework Strategies for Success**

Stakeholders were engaged across multiple career and expertise sectors, and tasked with identifying core strategies that should serve as a foundational structure for a family engagement framework. Identified foundational strategies include: Building Relationships, Communication, Linking Families to Learning Outcomes, Collaborative Practices, and Community Partnerships. The strategies identified are not stand-alone strategies, but are interlinked to show relational significance.

The strategies of the *Framework*, as illustrated and explained more fully below, aim to provide districts and schools with additional knowledge and resources to incorporate in a local school, family, and community engagement action plan.



### *Building Relationships*

The foundation for building relationships begins with mutual respect, trust, and valuing diversity. Relationships should encompass the ability to communicate with the purpose of listening and learning, as well as apprising all partners and advocates of a student's social-emotional and academic development.

### *Communication*

Effective communication is the ability to convey and receive information from families and advocates thus, establishing a two-way communication system using multiple approaches and methods. Clear and ongoing communication contributes to the efforts of building relationships between schools, families, and communities.

### *Linking Families to Learning Outcomes*

Families need to be informed of how they play a pivotal role in the success of their students. Connecting families to learning outcomes supports the cultivation of their buy-in for their student's overall attainment of the *Profile*. Families are presented with numerous obstacles that may hinder their ability to be involved at their students' schools; however, according to research, "the strongest and most consistent predictors of parents' involvement at school and at home are the specific school programs and teachers' practices that encourage and guide parent involvement. Regardless of parent education, family size, student ability, or school level...parents are more likely to become partners in their children's education if they perceive that the schools have strong practices to involve parents at school" (Epstein and Dauber, 1991, p. 297).

### *Collaborative Practices*

Initiatives should strive to bring families and staff together so that they can learn from and with each other. Collaborative practices signify that relationships between families and practitioners

are reciprocal and build upon the strengths of both parties. Everyone is viewed through an asset-based lens: teachers, families, community members, and the students (Mapp, Carver, and Lander, 2017). Collaborative practices allow for the sharing of information and working together to deliver outcomes that are not easily or effectively achieved by working in silos.

### *Community Partnerships*

Community partnerships are mutual commitments and an ongoing practice in which community organizations and schools engage families in relevant and culturally suitable ways. School-community partnerships can take a variety of forms. The most common linkages are partnerships with businesses, which can differ significantly in focus, scope, and content. Other school-community linkages involve universities, other educational institutions, government and military agencies, health care organizations, faith-based organizations, national service and volunteer organizations, senior citizen organizations, cultural and recreational institutions, other community-based organizations, and community volunteers who may provide resources and social support to youth and schools. Partnership activities also may have multiple foci; activities may be student, family, school, or community centered (Epstein and Associates, 2009).

Please see the Appendices for useful resources (Appendix C), Family Engagement Toolkit and Quick Self-Assessment Tools (Appendix D), and examples of promising partnership practices implemented in several South Carolina Schools (Appendix E).



## Appendix A: Acknowledgements

The SCDE is grateful to the many individuals who contributed to the development of the *South Carolina Family Engagement K-12 Framework* and for their ongoing commitment to support family engagement in all South Carolina districts, schools and communities.

Amy Bowles  
York County School District Two

Susan Gaston  
Dorchester County School District Two

Dr. Beth Brooks  
School District of Newberry County

Angelica Guerrero  
Richland County School District One

Kimberly Brunson  
Richland County School District One

Debbie Gunter  
Lexington County School District Two

Doris Burton  
Richland County School District One

Ellen Hamilton  
Clarendon County School District Two

Crystal Campbell  
Dorchester County First Steps

Bessie Hannibal  
Sumter County School District

Lydia Carnesale  
SC Childcare Resource and Referral

Jane Harrelson  
Berkeley County School District

Virginia Catoe  
Lexington-Richland School District Five

Karla Hawkins  
South Carolina Department of Education

Danielle Daniels  
Charleston County School District

Yolanda Hawkins  
Richland County School District One

MaryAnn Dieter  
Charleston County School District

Claressa Hinton  
Richland County School District One

John Dixon  
Richland County School District One

Amy Holbert  
Family Connections of South Carolina

Joseph Fraton  
One Green Apple

Skip Hopkins  
Wright Middle School

Rosa Fulmore  
Charleston County School District

Courtney Howard  
College of Charleston

Sandra Garner  
South Carolina Department of Education

Cindy Hunt  
Rock Hill Schools

Dr. Jacqueline Inabinette  
Orangeburg County Consolidated School  
District 5

Lou Jacobs  
South Carolina Department of Education

Dr. Kimberly Johnson  
Richland One School District

Jeanette Johnson  
AC Corcoran Elementary School

Rennetta Johnson  
Richland County School District One

Tyra Johnson  
Charleston County School District

Elif Karsli Calamak  
University of South Carolina

Debra Knight  
Richland County School District One

Kathleen Lawson Gibson  
Clarendon County School District One

Renee Manhoff  
South Carolina Department of Education

Merv McCrimmon  
Richland County School District One

Michelle Moorehead  
Richland County School District One

Merriman Nichols  
South Carolina Department of Education

T'Sheila Praileau  
Fairfield County School District

Lakenna Pressley  
Richland County School District One

Dr. Tremekia Priester  
South Carolina Department of Education

Margaret Quick  
Marlboro County School District

Melanie Ratcliffe  
South Carolina Baptist Convention

Lee Clamp  
South Carolina Baptist Convention

Crystal Rice  
Richland County School District One

Rhonda Robinson  
Dorchester County School District Four

B-Linda Rogers  
Richland County School District One

Erica Schmitt  
R. B. Stall High School

Gwendolyn Scott  
Richland County School District One

Denise Shaw  
Garrett Academy of Technology

Vanessa Smith  
Ladson Elementary School

Yolanda Smith  
Richland County School District One

Margaret Sordian  
Horry County School District

Tracie Sweet  
South Carolina Public Charter School  
District

Jennifer Szalwinski  
Francis Marion University Center of  
Excellence

Karen Utter  
South Carolina School Improvement  
Council

Stacey Washington  
Charleston County School District

Jonathan White  
Richland County School District One

Y'ticcia Williams  
Richland County School District One

Mike Windham  
Dorchester County School District Two

Glenda Wright  
Richland County School District One

Rep. Robert Williams  
Families Engagement

Roger Gore  
Families Engagement

Victoria Anderson  
Sumter School District

## Appendix B: References

- Carver, I., Lander, J., & Mapp, K. (2017). *Powerful Partnerships: A Teacher's Guide to Engaging Families for Student Success*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.
- Epstein, J. L., & Dauber, S. L. (1991). School programs and teacher practices of parent involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 91(3), 289-305.
- Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., Sheldon, S. B., . . . Williams, K. J. (2009). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Henderson, A., & Mapp, K. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
- Henderson, A. T., Mapp, K. L., Johnson, V. R., & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school partnerships*. New York: The New Press.
- National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group. (2009). Recommendations for federal policy. Retrieved from [link](#)

## **Appendix C: Resources**

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I, Part A– Parental Involvement  
[Section 1116 \(20 USC §6318\)](#)

Hanover Research  
[Best Practices in Family and Community Engagement](#)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Parent Participation  
[34 C.F.R. §300.322](#)

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, Article X  
[S.C. Code Ann. § 59-46-50 \(P\)](#)

National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)  
[NAFSCE](#)

National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University (NNPS)  
[NNPS](#)

National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)  
[PTA](#)

Promising Partnership Practices  
[Publication 2018](#)

S.C. Code of Laws Title 59, Chapter 28– Parental Involvement in Their Children’s Education  
[Title 59, Chapter 28](#)

SCDE Office of Early Learning and Literacy Framework (OELL)  
[SCDE OELL Framework](#)

South Carolina’s ESSA State Plan  
[SC ESSA](#)

South Carolina Child Early Reading Development and Education Program (CERDEP)  
[S.C. Code Ann. 59-156-110, et seq.](#)

South Carolina Education Accountability Act  
[S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-100, et seq.](#)

South Carolina Education and Economic Development Education Act (EEDA)  
[S.C. Code Ann. § 59-59-10, et seq.](#)

South Carolina Family Engagement K-12 Framework  
March 22, 2019  
Page 11

South Carolina General Education Provisions–Parental Involvement Program; Parent/Teacher Conferences

[S.C. Code Ann. § 59-1-454](#)

South Carolina Read to Succeed Act

[S.C. Code Ann. § 59-155-110, et seq.](#)

U.S. Department of Education’s (USED) Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships

[USED Dual Capacity Framework](#)

## Appendix D: Family Engagement Toolkit and Quick Self-Assessment

The purpose of the *Family Engagement Toolkit and Quick Self-Assessment* is to offer an illustration of how schools can genuinely gauge engagement efforts in building relationships with families and communities. Schools may elect to proceed systematically through each strategy of the toolkit, while others may choose to focus on only one strategy of the toolkit. The toolkit offers tips that can be used to encourage dialogue, increase understanding about family and community engagement, and build a plan to effectively involve families in the outcomes of their students.

### Getting Started

The first implementation step for utilizing the *Family Engagement Toolkit and Quick Self-Assessment* is identifying team members to serve on the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP). Establishing an ATP that is reflective of the diversity in the school or district is very important and will assist in the strength of the planning process.

Suggested ATP members may include:

- Principal/Site Administrator;
- Federal and state program staff;
- Teachers/school counselors;
- Community partners (business, faith-based, nonprofit, etc.);
- Parent Liaison; and/or
- Support staff (nurse, custodian, school secretary).

After identifying members to serve on the ATP, the facilitator will need to explain to the members why they were identified and how they are seen as an asset in increasing family engagement in a school. To ensure all members of the ATP are familiar with terminology, the facilitator will need to provide a clear, yet concise definition of family engagement.

Utilize the results from the *Quick Self-Assessment* tool to evaluate current strengths of strategies currently being implemented. Items identified and perceived by the ATP as “not yet” or “developing” can serve as a starting point for addressing family engagement in your school setting.

Table 1. *Quick Self-Assessment Tool*

Strategy One: Building Relationships Questions to consider Does your school provide the following:	Not yet	Developing	Progressing	Leading
A welcoming environment?				
Flexibility for parent/family participation?				
An unbiased atmosphere?				
Reassurance to parents of their value in their student's learning?				
Home visits?				
Diversity inclusion/awareness training for staff?				
Opportunities for parents to volunteer?				
Reassurance to parents of your commitment to their student's learning?				

Suggested Resources

[Developing Positive Relationships](#)

[Nurturing Positive Relationships with Parents](#)

[10 Ideas for Engaging Parents](#)



Table 2. *Quick Self-Assessment Tool*

Strategy Two: Communication				
Questions to consider				
When communicating with parents/families, does your staff/school provide the following:	Not yet	Developing	Progressing	Leading
A two-way channel for communication?				
An opportunity for parents to provide input on their students' social-emotional and educational background?				
Clear, concise information, and timely information?				
Parent friendly information, free of jargon?				
An easy-to-navigate website with current information?				
Various communication avenues to reach parents?				
A copy of Parent Expectations as referenced in S.C. Code of Laws Section 59-28-180 "The Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act"?				
Information in multiple languages?				
Expectations at the beginning of each school year regarding attendance, behavior, etc. policies?				

#### Suggested Resources

[3 Ways to Improve Parent-Teacher Communication](#)

[Innovative Ways to Communicate with Parents](#)

[The Positive Results of Parent Communication](#)

Table 3. *Quick Self-Assessment Tool*

Strategy Three: Linking Families to Learning Outcomes				
Questions to consider				
In terms of linking families to learning outcomes, does your school offer the following:	Not yet	Developing	Progressing	Leading
Informative feedback and opportunities for parent input on needed solutions?				
An avenue for feedback from families?				
Suggested tips for parents beyond ensuring a good night sleep during testing for students?				
Defined school goals and projected outcomes for students in a way parents understand?				
Information on how to monitor their student's progress throughout the year?				
Information on grade-level standards in parent-friendly format?				
Information on standardized tests and how to read the progress report?				
Personalized learning?				
Virtual learning?				
Parent workshops?				
Alternative engagement methods, recognizing not all parents are able to come to the school?				

Suggested Resources

[Family-School Links](#)

[Family Engagement and School Readiness](#)

Table 4. *Quick Self-Assessment Tool*

Strategy Four: Collaborative Practices				
Questions to consider	Not yet	Developing	Progressing	Leading
Does your school currently provide the following:				
Distribution of “how to” methods for homework and or educational assistance?				
Parent friendly explanations of what is taking place in the classroom and where their students currently stand?				
Encouraging literacy practices for students and families?				
Conduct a needs assessment of what tools parents may need to help their student(s) with reading, writing, math, science, time management, motivation, behavior, college and career planning, course selections, etc.				

Suggested Resources

[Eight Ways Educators Can Collaborate with Parents](#)  
[Strategies for Collaboration](#)

Table 5. *Quick Self-Assessment Tool*

Strategy Five: Community Partnerships				
Questions to consider	Not yet	Developing	Progressing	Leading
When considering community partnerships, has your school considered the following:				
Providing local businesses school highlights and the latest learning happenings or successes?				
Requesting guest speakers from local businesses for classroom or school events?				
Organizing tours of businesses for students and families?				
Asking for local businesses to highlight schools for outstanding performances?				

Suggested Resources

[School, Family, and Community Partnerships](#)

[Family-School-Community Partnerships](#)

## Appendix E: Promising Partnership Practices from Schools in South Carolina

The National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) provides professional development and on-going technical assistance to strengthen leadership for programs of school, family, and community partnerships. The NNPS, established by Dr. Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, assists schools, districts, organizations, and state departments of education to develop and sustain research-based partnership programs that contribute to student learning and development. Annually, a book of *Promising Partnership Practices* is published through NNPS, and it highlights promising school practices nationally and internationally. Below are examples from South Carolina schools from the NNPS publications in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Each activity demonstrates how the five strategies of the *Framework* can be put into practice to positively impact student outcomes.

*C.A.M.P. Read a Lot!*  
Delmae Heights Elementary School  
Florence, SC<sup>1</sup>

The Action Team for Partnerships at Delmae Heights Elementary School knows how to get everyone engaged. At a camp-themed reading night, every teacher helped run the event. The teachers talked over their goals for parent involvement and discussed how to spotlight reading in ways that would appeal to students and parents. Named for Community And Magnificent Partners, C. A. M. P. was attended by about 300 students, parents, and community partners, and many teachers. Families were served a pizza dinner when they arrived and played BINGO while they ate. BINGO winners choose from a vast collection of new books, purchased as prizes for the event with a small grant from their partner at Francis Marion University. Then, everyone went to a classroom to participate in a literacy session.

There were four session topics: reading accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and stamina/engagement. Parents and students could choose to attend two sessions. Each topic was covered in the same way and with the same resources in three classrooms to accommodate the big crowd. The resulting twelve classrooms were staffed by 2-3 teachers who presented research-based reading strategies on how parents can help their children on reading at home, and could practice with their child in the session and use at home. To help the parents decide, in advance, which sessions they wanted to attend, they received pre-camp questions such as: Does your child use reading strategies when he/she comes to an unknown word? And does your child read as if he/she is reading a list of words rather than sounding like he/she is reading sentences? By providing questions in advance,

---

<sup>1</sup> From *Promising Partnership Practices* (p. 4), by John Hopkins University, 2018, Baltimore, Maryland: National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University. Reprinted with permission.

parents could listen to their child read before coming to C.A.M.P. Read a Lot! and select the most meaningful session for them.

One teacher reported, “One of my [student’s] parents said that she always thought her child was a good reader because she could say the words, but now she realized reading was about more than that.” Several parents reached out to the teachers to confer about which sessions would be best to attend based on the teachers’ observations of their children in the classroom. At the event, community partners set up displays linked to literacy. A prior teacher at the school is a published author who came to talk with parents and students, answered questions, and signed books. A book store sent a representative to share STEM literature because Delmae is a certified STEM school. The bookstore brought a Lego robot to the school for students to explore and use, along with several baskets of goodies for door prizes. A public library supervisor brought a display of library books, library information, and a form for students and parents to apply for library cards. One teacher remarked that the school has built strong connections in the community: “Our community literacy partners support us in so many ways and we truly appreciate all they do for our students.” C.A.M.P. Read a Lot! was a clear success and much of the credit goes to the teachers who were fully invested and the school administrators who strongly supported the event, including providing teachers with planning time so that their committees could work together on all aspects of activity.

*Jill Russell*  
*Read to Succeed Literacy Coach*

*Family Counts Math Night*  
John W. Moore Intermediate School  
Florence, South Carolina<sup>2</sup>

“When are we ever going to use this?” is a question lobbed at math teachers everywhere. Students at John W. Moore Intermediate got a good answer when school officials called on parents to serve as expert witnesses on how, when, and where math is used in real life. The school’s annual Math Night—this one titled Family Counts—was held in a local grocery store where students helped their parents calculate prices and compare brands. At the store, students and parents were given a clipboard, pencil, and set of math challenges, based on grade-level math standards. They checked prices of store brands, compared other brands, explored bulk purchasing, and accounted for costs by volume. They discussed why cheaper is not always better, and then why cheaper sometimes is better. The completed challenges were exchanged for a prize of candy, pens, math-related bracelet, or other award. The prizes, clipboards, calculators, and pencils were

---

<sup>2</sup> From *Promising Partnership Practices* (p. 11), by John Hopkins University, 2018, Baltimore, Maryland: National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University. Reprinted with permission.

purchased for \$250 and with a small grant from the school's partners on family and community engagement at Francis Marion University. The math challenges and scenarios were developed by Moore's STEM coach and math teachers to address 5th and 6th grade math standards.

According to one student, the questions were easy at first, "but then it got hard." Teachers and administrators were on hand to address questions from students or parents. The teachers reported that the students "were eager to complete the challenges." Students from two local high schools also helped out and earned community service credit for providing extra support at Moore's math night. Most students' questions were answered by the parents, themselves, because they had a great deal of experience in grocery stores. The evening set a flexible schedule. Students and parents could come any time between 6 p.m. to the store's closing. Several families brought along siblings, and some used the opportunity to conduct their regular grocery shopping, as well. Everyone seemed to benefit from the math applications. Students saw that their school skills had real value. Parent reported that they paid new attention to bulk pricing, reading labels, and cost comparisons to save money. The teachers distributed additional activities that parents and students could use on future shopping trips.

A local newspaper reporter came to interview students, parents, and teachers for a feature article the next day. About 50 families participated in the well-planned Math Night. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), teachers, and administrators advertised steadily during the month preceding Family Counts—Math Night. Exit surveys from parents indicated that they saw greater importance in involving their children in grocery shopping, and expressed interest in similar future activities and supplemental math materials. Students presented the grocery store with a banner signed by students and school staff to thank management for its cooperation. To build on this year's good will, the ATP and others will work with the grocery store to provide a take-home meal or ingredients to participating families. Some of the regular customers at the store stopped to ask what was happening. The answer? Math was having a real good time.

*Joanna McCumber*  
*STEM Coach*

*Parent Spring Fling*  
H. B. Rhame Elementary School  
Columbia, SC<sup>3</sup>

During the National Week of the Young Child in April, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and teachers at H.B. Rhame Elementary wanted to inspire and enable parents of young learners (PreK-2) to be engaged in their children's education at school and at home. Over 90% of students at Rhame qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. All teachers, parents, and staff are working to ensure a positive school climate and student success at each grade level (PreK-5). The Parent Spring Fling aimed to reinforce the importance of parents as partners for the long term. Earlier in the school year, many parents participated in Makerspace with Mom and Discovery with Dad. These events were designed for parents to gain an understanding of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) concepts and classes. At these popular sessions, teachers worked with parents to craft a vision of STEAM activities at school that could be supported and enhanced at home. Parents strengthened their understanding of the school's vision that students could succeed at a high level, and how they could support this goal at home. The next step was taken at the Parent Spring Fling—a full day extravaganza for PreK-2 students and their parents.

Each classroom conducted a station with activities linked to grade-level learning standards in reading/literacy, and STEAM subjects. The PreK-2 classes were assigned a station rotation schedule for students and parents to visit all of the learning stations. Support staff and teachers facilitated activities at the hands-on locations: puppet making, flower designing, planting and gardening, creative expressions and games, and literacy BINGO. As classes rotated through the stations, 150 parents and 300 students and their teachers were guided to exercise logic, reasoning, critical thinking, and creative expression to complete the activities in the station rotation. They were able to engage and collaborate with each other as they completed the tasks. Students enjoyed having their parents, grandparents, or caring adult alongside them assisting in the learning process. Parents took a break in the media center for a Lunch and Learn session with the principal and the district's parent engagement specialist. They discussed strategies and parents' questions about student attendance, academic standards, and summer enrichment activities that would help students transition successfully to the next grade level. Then, parents rejoined their child at lunch for a community theatre presentation of Chicken Little, which helped students discuss the importance of believing in yourself and working together with others.

Parents could attend the Spring Fling at any time during the day that was convenient for them. One father reported, "I'm glad I came. I really enjoyed working with my son at all the different stations. This is something you should do, again, next year." A teacher agreed, "Parents loved the station rotations. It was

---

<sup>3</sup> From *Promising Partnership Practices* (p. 51), by John Hopkins University, 2018, Baltimore, Maryland: National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University. Reprinted with permission.



great to see so many parents were here to support the event.” The Countdown to Kindergarten was particularly popular. The ATP agreed that this should be an annual event. They plan to work with the local college and high school to recruit more volunteers for more stations so that learning will occur in small groups. The principal commented, “It was amazing seeing the number of parents who participated in this all day event. Parents who were assisting the teachers and staff made the impossible possible.”

*Clarissa Hinton*  
*Parent Engagement Specialist*